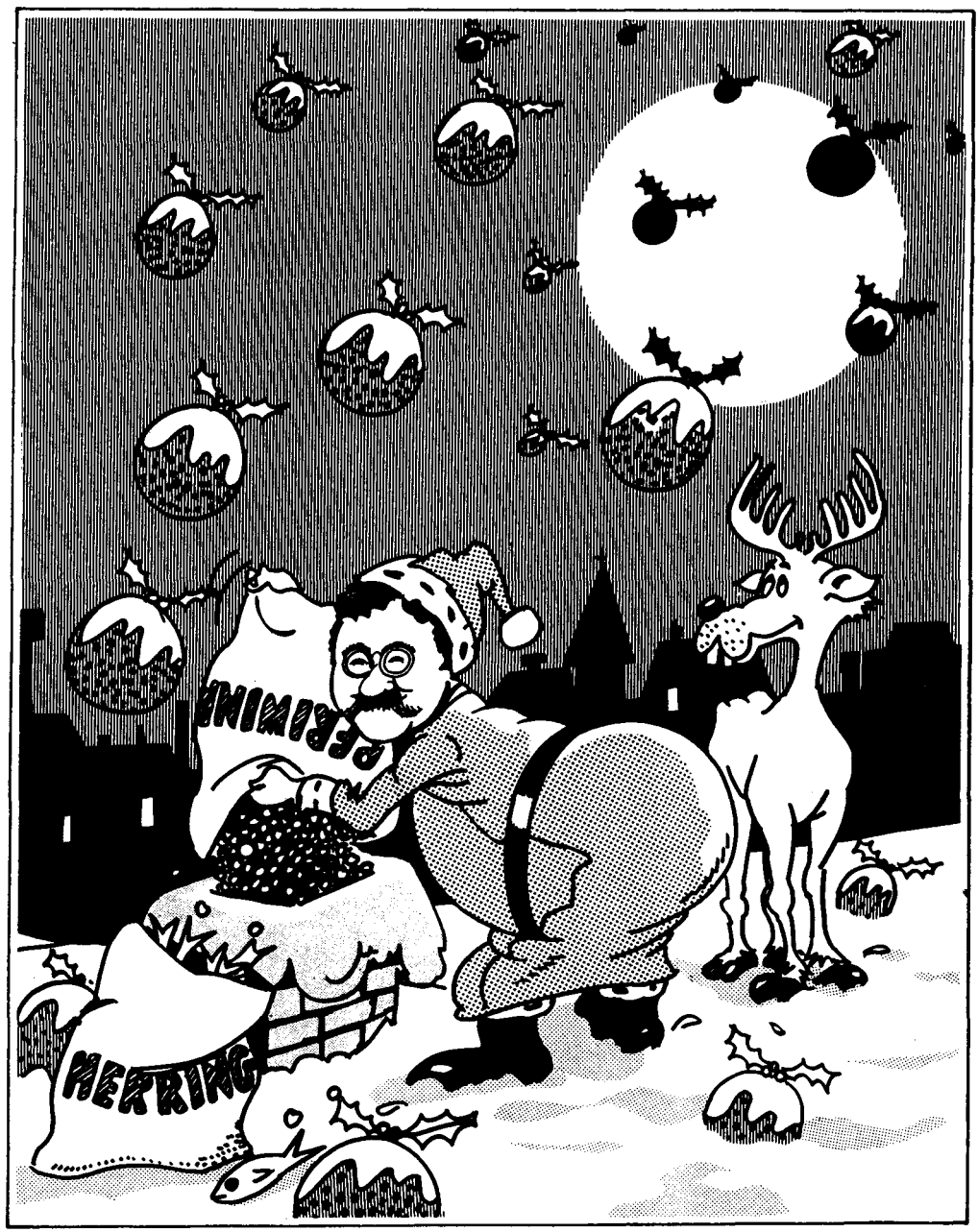
The News



THE NEWS vol.1. no.2. JAN. 1974

THE NEWS is a non-profit-making bi-monthly miscellany of Fortean news and notes. Edited and published by Robert JM Rickard, (with an arrangement with INFO.) - 31 Kingswood Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9AN. *@*@*@*@*@*@*@*@*@*@*@*
Single issues - 35p. 6 issue sub. £1.80. or $4.50. POs & Cheques payable to RJM Rickard, please, not the NEWS.

Yesterdays news tomorrow!

Cover by Lynne Willey depicting 'The Ghost of Christmas Presents.'

APPLAUSE...APPLAUSE...

NEWS 1 seems to have gone down well with you all. Many thanks to all those who have written, alas time does not permit a reply to each one. We need more subscribers if we are to cover the cost of a year's issues - simple economics - we are not yet out of the woods. So if you know any potential Fortean - beat him into subscription.

THE HAUNTED TYPEWRITER.

No prizes for those who spotted all the mistakes and typoes in the last ish. which apart from our pet gremlin in the machine, was the unfortunate byproduct of our unholy impatience to see the end result and sudden blackouts while typing. We never did pay much attention to the 'Improve your wordpower' page of the old Readers Digest - but we're a dab-hand at lame excuses.

CATEGORIES ? ARTICLES ? OR FEATURES?

We have been keeping back a few notes on falls of chunks of ice from the sky with the intention of making the category more substantial. It will appear next ish. But this has caused us to reflect on the feature Vs the notes as they come in one by one. The former is something you can get your teeth into; the latter is likely to be more 'up to date'. But then since our schedule has a built-in editorial and printing delay of 4 - 8 weeks, does 'currency' really matter? Please let us know what you think.

In this issue we print a short piece by Nigel Watson on anomalous phenomena on the moon. For those not familiar with such things, here is an introduction. Hardened Forteans will be interested in the reply by the librarian of the Royal Astronomical Society to Mr. Watson's inquiry about one of Charles Fort's data sources. We heartily welcome researches like this, and can only exhort our readers to feverish curiosity and to look into local events - we will give their work a hearing.

Further to all this, we observe that coverage of professional and learned journals is conspicuous by its absence from the NEWS so far. The popular impression that the newspapers and scandal-rags were Fort's major source is a complete fallacy. Analysis of his sources shows that the much greater majority were culled from 'respectable' periodicals. Well..our record on this has been sadly lacking (not that we have any urge to become 'respectable' - whatever that is!) and we urge our readers to keep an eye on the journals pertinent to their professions, or any they run into in their work.

INFO.

It wasn't made clear, or stated in our colophon last issue, but we are forging a strong working relationship with the International Fortean Organisation (INFO) who are the only and legitimate successors to the original (now defuct) Fortean Society. The NEWS was primarily conceived to supplement the excellent INFO Journal in reportage of local and current notes etc, and a deal less formal. It is not aimed at INFO members but Forteans everywhere - We'll see how things go, since there is quite a lot of potential in the air.

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MESSAGE.

By superhuman effort we are bringing forward the schedule on this issue - not because of any sound and practical reason - but simply because we wanted our cover - rendered for us by Lynne Willey - to remain, to some degree, topical by the time you receive it. Referring to the above paragraph on being more particular about our sources and data - we can only give here an appropriate quote from the man himself:

'I say to myself: "You are a benign ghoul, digging up dead old legends and superstitions, trying to breathe life into them, well then, why have you neglected Santa Claus?" But I'm particular in the matter of data, or alleged data. I have come upon no record, or alleged record of mysterious footprints in snow, on roofs of houses, leading to chimneys, Christmas Eves.' LO! XIII.

Skyward Ho! (But keep dodging the ice chunks).

NOTES

appearances

MYSTERY OF 250 FISH IN AN OLD TANK.

A few old bicycles and the odd waterlogged boot were all the firemen expected to find in the water tank they had been sent to empty in a town centre. Instead they found something much more lively - 250 plump roach and perch, happily swimming about in the 40 ft. wide tank, a relic of wartime fire precautions.

They couldn't leave them in a tank without water - so the firemen scooped them into a dustbin. Then leading Firemen Collin Caswell and Ken Major went back after work to the dustbin in Albert St. Redditch, Worcs and dragged it half a mile to a pond, where they let the fish go. But how the fish got into the tank was still a mystery last night. Collin said: "All we can think is that someone dropped in a couple of fish years ago and they bred from them."

Daily Mirror. 30 Aug 1968.
Credit: A Smith.

It would appear that there is much tooing and froing in the universe. Fort postulated some teleportative force that responded to a need or that made provisions for future needs. If this is so then we observe that the sentience is of a different order and akin to that of an idiot, albeit a cosmic one. In some future issue we shall open the file on the elusive pumas, wild boars, exotic birds of Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire. In the meantime, see also our Disappearance category.

archaeology

THE DAGGER MAN.

A man's skeleton, believed to be over 2600 years old, has been found in a shallow grave at Southwick, near Oundle, Northamptonshire. A dagger was in his right hand. The legbones of a sheep were also in the grave.

Sunday Times. 14 Oct 73.

Following the Cyclops sensation (see News 1.) we were half expecting news of a Satyr.

deaths & bodies

DEATH RIDDLE OF LAST SNAP.

A new mystery has developed over nurse Philippa Coon, said to have drowned herself in India. Eight months after her reported death the Foreign Office have sent her parents a photograph alleged to be of Philippa. But her mother, Mrs Olive Coon, said yesterday: "There is no doubt in my mind that the photograph is not of my daughter. The bone structure of the face is different and the body is of a different build."

Her husband Laurie added: "Effects alleged to be our daughter's do not appear to be hers, and a ring just wouldn't fit her fingers. We have told officials that the photograph is not that of our daughter but they appear to have ignored us."

Philippa's parents of Braemar Crescent, Leigh-on-sea, Essex, were told of her death in February. Suicide was only mentioned to them after Philippa's body was cremated. Mr. Coon, chief tax accountant for a big firm, has called in a private detective, and Mrs. Jean Leach, a medium.

News of the World. 30 Sept 73.

MYSTERY OVER BURIAL AT SEA.

A woman whose body was found off a crowded holiday beach was still unidentified last night, despite a big police investigation. Tests showed that the woman died from natural causes and had been enbalmed to be buried at sea. But the police want to know how her coffin came open and which ship 'buried' the body so close inshore. Fishermen found the woman, aged about 40, on Tuesday 6 miles off Seaford, near Newhaven, Sussex.

Daily Mirror. 5 July 73.

DEATH VERDICT.

Police yesterday announced that a tramp found with serious head injuries in a churchyard off Whitechapel Road, Stepney, London probably died 'accidentally'.

Daily Express. 1 Oct 73.

BODY IN CELLAR.

Police were yesterday trying to identify the body of a young girl found in the cellar of an empty house. Murder is not suspected.

Sunday People. 30 Sept 73.

WOMAN IN SEA

An unidentified woman was found dead in the sea yesterday off Meadfoot Beach, Torquay.

Daily Express. 6 Oct 73.

RIDDLE OF THE BODY IN GIRL'S BED.

The widow of a man found dead in 16-year-old Moira Cleland's bed, said: "I'm not satisfied with the inquiries into his death." Three mysteries confront the police. 24-year-old chef Thomas Law died from an overdose of sleeping pills belonging to the girl's mother. Yet, according to his widow, Gladys, 23, he could not stand drugs in any form. He would not even take aspirin.

Secondly; a bottle the pills were taken from had just two fingerprints on it - both Mr. Law's. Yet the girl's mother said the bottle had previously been handled so much it should have had 'a load of fingerprints on it'. The inquest was told by a police sergeant that prints could have been put on it after the death, though that was thought unlikely.

The third riddle is that the bottle was emptied yet was found after Mr. Law's death in its usual place in the mother's room.

Mrs Law said that she and her husband had a minor argument at the Devon Coast Country Club holiday camp near Paignton. He refused to come to bed and went back to the club. Later he left with Mrs Cleland and her daughter; they went back to the staff premises where they woke up Mrs Cleland's common law husband, Bernard Sime. Law went to sleep on their bedroom floor, and the couple went to a spare room. The inquest heard that Mr. Law woke up, dressed and went to Moira's room.

She says: "I didn't sleep with him. He just wanted to talk." She then went to the other room leaving him in hers. In the morning he was found dead. Mrs. Cleland said: "Honest to God we had nothing to do with Tommy's death. The sleeping tablets were mine, but I don't know how he got to take them. The police gave me a rough time." A police spokesman said: "We have turned this case over and over and we are still puzzled."

News of the World. 28 Oct 73.

SISTER' DEATH PLUNGE.

An airline stewardess and her sister yesterday plunged to their deaths from the seventh-floor window of their New York hotel room. Police said they were searching for the elder sister's boyfriend.

Sunday Mercury. 21 Oct 73.

BRIDEGROOM DIES AT HIS OWN STAG PARTY.

Senior Aircraftman Ian Woodward, a 6ft.3in., 23-year-old rugby player, died suddenly during a stag party at RAF Lyneham, Wilts.

Daily Express. 27 Oct 73.

WIFE FOUND DEAD IN BATH.

An inquest will be held on Mrs. Jenowefa Jabczynski, aged 51, who was found dead about 8.30 am. yesterday in the bath at her School Road home, Hall Green, Birmingham, by her husband. She went to have a bath around 12.30 am. When she was found, the taps were still running. A police spokesman said there did not appear to be any suspicious circumstances.

Sunday Mercury. 28 Oct 73.

Unless Mrs. Jabczynski had been lying in the bath with the taps running unnoticed for twenty hours , it is likely that she was found at 8.30 pm. and that it was a typographical error.

RIDDLE OF DEAD BOY.

A murder hunt started yesterday after a 9-year-old boy was found dead on waste ground. The body of Richard Sutherland, who had been missing from his home in Myreside St, Glasgow, was discovered near the spot where a toddler was found dead earlier this year. Richard's parents contacted the police when he vanished on Wednesday. In April, 3-year-old Gordon McEwan was found dead on the same waste ground.

Sun. 2 Nov 73.

MAN IN TOMB WAS ALIVE.

A doctor who was buried in a family mausoleum after being certified dead from a heart attack may have been entombed alive, police revealed yesterday at Mendoza, Argentina.

Three nights after Dr. Vincente Polimeni's funeral, a night watchman heard noises in the tomb. The coffin was found to have fallen on the floor damaged, and the doctor's body bore new bruises and scratches.

Daily Telegraph. 5 Jan 73.
Also in Daily Express of same date.

disappearances

DIVERS HUNT FOR THE FISH THAT GOT AWAY.

A crack squad of police frogmen have been called into action...to track down thousands of very slippery characters. Escapers that appear to have disappeared from a special 'top security' prison' - a 14ft. deep pool. The pool which belongs to a works angling club at Smethwick, Staffs, was stocked with thousands of roach, perch, bream and gudgeon three years ago. Members looked forward to some heavy work with rod and reel - but all they have caught were a few 'tiddlers'.

The club is the Guest, Keen & Nettlefold Sports & Recreation Club in Thimblemill Rd, Smethwick. Committee member Bill Blick, 40, said yesterday: "We can't understand where the fish have gone. So we asked the police to help." Mr. Blick of St Katherine's Rd, Smethwick added: "We expected to be pulling out fish weighing at least a pound. But we are lucky if a sixteen-man fishing team weighs in with a catch of several ounces". Chief Inspector Kenneth Cocayne said, "Samples of pool-water have been sent to the public analyst." One of the frogmen added: "If there are any big fish in the pool we haven't seen them. The biggest are 3 in. long."

Contributor A Smith was unable to give the exact source for this interesting cutting, but thinks it might have been the Daily Mirror, sometime in 1969. See back to Appearances for the mysterious arrival of perches and roaches, in an inaccessible tank, not very far away from Smethwick. Can anybody help date this item?

SEANCE CLUE TO MISSING WOMAN.

Mrs Doris Symonds disappeared while shopping in Plymouth in 1963, leaving behind a 4-year-old son and all her posessions. Her husband was aquitted of her murder at Exeter Crown Court in February this year. And now a medium has told police that he spoke to her while in a trance, and she said that she had been strangled and dumped in a flooded quarry on the edge of Dartmoor. A police spokesman said: "We are taking what we consider relevant. There are certain aspects in the report which may interest us." From Daily Mail 12 Nov 73. Credit DJ McAllister.

MISSING YAUGHT.

David McAllister also sent us a note from Daily Mirror 8 Sept 73, which mentions that French authorities in Papeete, Tahiti, have denied that they have seized the New Zealand nuclear-protest yacht 'Spirit of Peace'. Its whereabouts, and whether the 3-man crew are still alive, were, at that time, still a mystery. Does anyone in the Great Out There know the follow-up to this one?

FLYING PIG VANISHES.

Farmer Ted Jewell yesterday lost an 11 stone pig while taking it in a lorry to an Eastleigh, Hants, slaughter-house. Said Ted; "A pig jumping over a 5ft. tailboard, then down 6ft. on to the road is almost as daft as a pig flying. But that's all that could have happened."

The People. 17 July 1966.
Credit: A Smith.

esp & powers

SON'S SIXTH SENSE SAVES FAMILY.

Housewife Margaret Woellner was busy preparing dinner in the kitchen of her new home when her 10-year-old son Joachim burst in. He stood terrified in the doorway as he said: "Mummy, get out of the kitchen quickly...Something terrible is going to happen."

Mrs Woellner only had to look at Joachim's ashen face to realise he wasn't joking. She scooped up her 3-year-old daughter Ulrike and dashed out of the house in Witzhelden, West Germany. Seconds later an explosion - caused by a faulty gas main connection - wrecked the three-bedroomed house.

Mrs Woellner then asked her son how he knew the accident was going to happen. Joachim replied: "I honestly don't know. I just had this strange idea that something was about to happen. It was as if there was a voice saying 'Go and fetch your mother and sister otherwise it will be too late'." His mother said later: "It was a marvel. I still don't understand it."

Professor Hans Bender, head of the para-psychology department at Freiburg University, South Baden, explained the case differently. He said: "There are people who have a sixth sense. For years we here at the university have been investigating similar cases where people have known that something tragic was about to happen. Mostly such cases take the form of dreams and visions. In children, this so-called sixth sense is often pronounced."

Sunday Express. 2 April 72.

TELEKINESIS MAN GOES ON BENDER.

At the time of typing,the UK has been subjected to a mind-boggling flying visit by Uri Geller, a 26-year-old Israeli, who can demonstrate quite remarkable powers of telekinesis. He had flown in to appear on the BBC's Dimbleby Talk-in on the 23rd November. In the afternoon before the show, he gave a press preview of what he could do.

'Somebody offered a key and the donor held it while Uri stroked it with his forefinger...but the key remained straight. "I might not be able to do it - I'm nervous," he said calling for another key. But again he failed. Then suddenly the shaft of the third key began slowly to curl, and kept on curling. Next he demonstrated telepathy by accurately reproducing a drawing made by David Dimbleby, and unseen by anyone else. Uri also announced that he had undergone many tests at the Stanford Research Institute in California, and by astronaut-turned- psi researcher Edgar Mitchell. Two of the Stanford scientists were reported to have said that they could not claim Uri had any psychical powers but they had observed phenomena for which there was no scientific explanation. From Daily Express. 23 Nov 73.

The papers the next day were full of journalistic gasps. We missed the programme ourselves but heard many 'I see it, but I still don't believe it' reports. The TV show went off spectacularly enough with his mind-reading and fork-bending. Even to breaking a paperknife on Jimmy Young's Radio show. But something far more amazing and unexpected was happening. For while Uri was in London, a gold bracelet belonging to Maureen Cox began to buckle, 30 miles away in Godalming, Surrey. In Dunstable, Beds, Police constable John Cole's spoons and knives just curled up. A jeweller phoned the BBC to say that a canteen of cutlery had taken a turn for the worse. Then a watchmaker saying his tweezers had bent. Mrs Dora Portman of Harrow, Middlesex, said: "I was stirring the soup and suddenly the ladle started bending." When asked if he could straighten them all out he replied that he could if he tried, but best to leave them bent, beacuse seeing is believing. There were many other calls from listeners all over the country about the antics of their cutlery etc, as Uri appeared on the Radio show. This info. from Daily Mirror 24 Nov 73. Credit: Steve Moore.

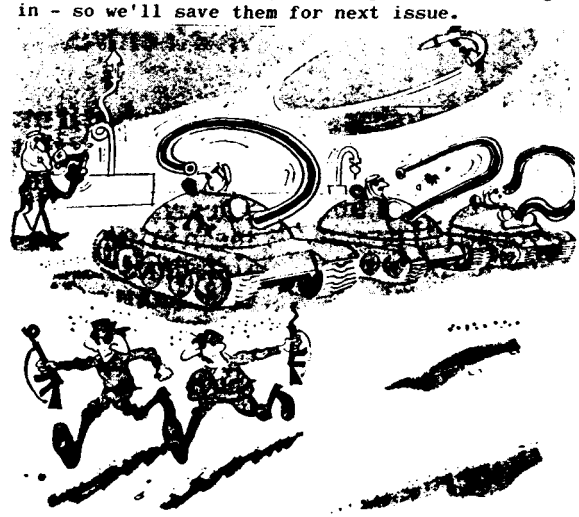
All that was on the Saturday. Sure enough the reporters were after him in earnest for the

Sunday nationals. He gave a demonstration to the newshounds in his hotel room on Saturday night. First he did his mind-reading tricks. Then, as Jack Lewis of the Sunday Mirror (25 Nov 73) takes up the story: "Uri asked us to produce our keys. He chose one belonging to a woman reporter, and asked her to hold it, while he gently rubbed it with one finger. He also held his palm over it, and clenched his fist. When she opened her hand, the key had curved visibly. When he lay it on an upturned metal wastebasket, within seconds it had bent grotesquely. Throughout the experiment, I held my own RAC key in my hand. I glanced at it and was astonished when I saw it had become as bent as the other one." The report in the News of the World (same date) has a few more details. 'Uri was offered a steel comb. He tossed it on to the bed and carried on answering questions. Suddenly the teeth of the comb closed together and it began to bend. Another reporter fumbled for his cigarette lighter which had been functioning normally all morning. The metal casing was buckled. Uri apologised: "I don't know how it happens."'

Finally, Uri Geller was driven to the airport - with Bryan Silcock of the Sunday Times in the car with him. "He bent a very tough key to my office desk without even touching it. I tried to bend that key myself before leaving the office. I could not do it with my bare hands - Uri did it in seconds. It is the same key. It was lying flat in the palm of photographer Bryan Wharton's hand at the time. At the airport, Mrs Tessa Trapmore on the KLM desk, who had seen him on TV the night before, asked him to mend her watch. It was stopped at 11.10. He held it between the palms of his hands for a few seconds. The hands moved to nine o'clock. Geller then stroked a thick paper-knife until it started to bend. He gave it to Mrs Elna Burroughs, also of KLM, to hold and the knife continued to bend. Uri Geller finally boarded the plane to Paris leaving this initially highly sceptical science correspondent with his mind totally blown."

There are many questions raised by all this, of course. Was there a selection operating for items of jewellery or domestic ware, things of relative unimportance? Did the objects have to be metal? If Uri was projecting or catalysing a force that affected metallic objects at quite a radius all around him - then did any machines go haywire? What about the sophisticated gadgetry of TV and radio studios, and the airport computers? We see that dashing young scientist-about-TV studios Prof. John Taylor, who took part in Dimbleby's Talk-in, has said: "I would like to try to find out how. Some kind of explanation along conventional scientific lines might be possible. I would very much like to get in touch with people who had odd experiences during the TV programme as they might have similar but less developed powers." Now that's an interesting thought - that Uri was triggering latent TK abilities in others. In the News of the World report (above), Uri says "When I was 19, we moved to Israel, where I toured theatres. Even Golda Meir gave me a plug." (Which no doubt bent.). But we can't help wondering about this - about Uri being called up in the future (God forbid) - being sent to the front to catalyse all the latent TKs - and putting a few kinks in tank gun-barrels; triggering a few bombs before the enemy fires them; shutting off jets in mid air - pray, one and all, it never happens.

The Uri Geller story is far from ended - at the time of going to press, more reports are coming in - so we'll save them for next issue.



"It's Uri the Israeli mind-bender"

No sooner was the (unoriginal) speculation above typed, than cartoons, like this one by Waite (Daily Mirror. 26 Nov 73)began appearing.

fires

DEATH BLAZE MYSTERY.

The cause of a fire in a Handsworth house, where a 64-year-old man died, remained a mystery after a Birmingham inquest. The City Coroner, Mr George Billington, recorded a verdict of 'Accidental Death' on Mr John Joseph McRory, a factory labourer, who was dragged from his blazing house at Victoria Terrace, Booth St, on April 8. A Fire Brigade officer who attended the fire said that he could see no definite cause of the blaze. There was an electric fire in the corner and a gas meter cupboard nearby had been severely damaged.

Birmingham Evening Mail. 20 April 73.

BLAZE VICTIM.

The soldier burned to death in a Chester camp during the weekend was identified by a dental surgeon yesterday as Lance Corporal William Hawkes, 25, of Woodbank, Tiverton, Worcester. An inquest on him was adjourned.

Daily Express. 18 Oct 73.

FOUND DEAD.

Mr. William McLeod, a pensioner in his 80s,was found dead in a fire-damaged room of his home in St. Silas Square, Nechells, Birmingham, yesterday.

Sunday Mercury. 21 Oct 73.

BURNED WOMAN'S RUN FOR HELP.

A 23-year-old woman ran 200 yards to a friend's house after suffering severe burns at her home in Coseley, Dudley, yesterday. Miss Diane Mold is believed to have suffered a blackout and fallen onto an open coal fire at her Childs Avenue home. She ripped off her burnt clothing, put on a coat and ran for help to a friend, Mrs Doreen Wright of Swann Rd, Coseley. Ambulancemen were called and Diane was taken first to Dudley Guest Hospital and later transferred to the Burns Unit at Birmingham Accident Hospital. A hospital spokesman said later that Diane had suffered 15% burns but was fairly comfortable.

Sunday Mercury. 27 Oct 73.

HOSPITAL GIRL IN FLAMES.

A girl student was seriously ill with back and chest burns today after being turned into a flaming torch in a Birmingham hospital ward. The girl, who is 18, ran from a ward where she is a patient to a bathroom with her nightdress on fire. A hospital spokesman said a nurse on duty heard her screams and found her in the bathroom with the taps running. Her bed in the ward was smouldering.

"The nurse wrapped her in blankets and put out the fire. First Aid was administered before she was taken to the Burns Unit." The girl apparantly had some matches in the ward at All Saints Hospital. An enquiry has been started.

Birmingham Evening Mail. 26 Oct 73.

As Forteans we cannot hold firmly to any belief in coincidences, but must also consider, however unlikely, that two young girls catching fire and running so near each other in time and space, might very well have some more sinister aspect. See Lo! and Wild Talents for Fort's speculations on attacks by beings with a fiery hunger. In the meantime however, the editor has written to both hospitals involved (on the 27th), but has received no reply to date. One of the more puzzling aspects about spontaneous combustion cases (not that these are definitely) is that the victims, usually young girls with unhappy backgrounds seem not to notice their predicament until it is almost too late. They have been hypnotized, or by some means their sensibility has been reduced until they cannot fail to notice - then, suddenly they feel the pain dreadfully, and take much longer than normal to recover from the burns.

BREAK-IN MAN WAS TRAPPED BY BLAZE.

A man who broke into a factory was seen later trapped in the building by a severe fire,a jury at Birmingham Crown Court was told. Alan Bricknell, 24, of Argosy House,Castle Vale, pleaded guilty to burglary with intent to steal and was found guilty of arson, to which he had pleaded not guilty.

The prosecution alleged Bricknell broke into the premises of Brook Welding Company in Fazely St, and when he was unable to find the keys to the safe, he set fire to the premises. In the early hours of Sunday August 5th, two policemen in Masshouse saw smoke and flames coming from the factory. Sometime later, while firemen were fighting the blaze, a man was seen at the window of the first floor. He broke a pane of glass and shouted for help.

A ladder was put up to the window and the man, Bricknell, climbed down. He told the police that some other men had left him in the building. He also said: "We broke in to do the safe. I thought I was going to get roasted. I'm so glad you came." He was arrested for breaking into the building, and when searched, a cigarette lighter was found in his pocket. Mr. David Crigman, for the Crown, said the main seat of the fire was on the staircase below where Bricknell was trapped. There were also three other minor seats of fire, completely independent of the main seat. It was estimated the main fire had been burning for at least 40 minutes before firemen arrived.

Birmingham Evening Mail. 26 Oct 73.

The man could have been as foolish as suggested of course - but it could have been something else too. I am reminded of a case in Fort where a thief (I think) was pursued into a hardware store and 'just happened to pass under a scythe as it fell. The other 'apparently' unconnected fires in the building are interesting, though I dare say some ultra-rationalists could spoil our fun by attributing them to the would-be thief.

MYSTERY FIRE. NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE?

"Following an article by Lanning Roper deploring the destruction of trees by farmers burning stubble (Gardening. Sept 16), you published a photograph of a pile-up on the M1 which you described as 'one consequence of out-of-control stubble burning'.

I farm the field which caught fire, the smoke from which caused the accident on the motorway. I had bales of straw in the field, 150 of which were destroyed, and I had growing oats in an adjoining field. For these two reasons alone I would not have been burning stubble at that time. The police and the National Farmer's Union were most concerned about the fire, but were quite satisfied that I was in complete ignorance of its cause."

Mrs. Nan C Lewin, Luton.
(Letters to the Editor).

Sunday Times. 28 Oct 73.

THE LEY HUNTER.
A magazine of Ancient Skills & Wisdom
Specimen copy ... 15p inc. post.
6 Months ..... 75p " " .
1 Year ..... £1.50p " " .
5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, Co. Durham, TS25 2AT.

ghosts & poltergeists

EVICTED...GHOST IN A COUNCIL HOUSE.

A spiritualist medium has 'evicted' a ghost from a council house. She was called in after tenants claimed they were living in terror. They were renting a 70-year-old house bought by Chichester City Council, Sussex, to reduce its housing list. The medium was called in by Mr. Jeremy Adams, Chichester's housing manager.

Mr Adams said: "The wife heard the ghost's footsteps on the stairs at night and rooms would suddenly go cold." The medium,Mrs Joan Stillwell, said:"I went to the empty house with Mr. Adams and at once sensed a presence. Then I saw it - the ghost ofa small, old, gery-haired lady. She told me she did not like anyone being in her house. Then I told her what trouble she was causing people. At this she looked shocked and then she just drifted away through a wall." The ghost has not been seen since - and the house is now occupied by new tenants.

Sunday Mirror. 4 Nov 73.

FAMILY QUITS HAUNTED FLAT.

Things went more than bump in the night for Jeremiah O'Leary. He was sleeping peacefully. At about 2am he suddenly broke out in a cold sweat and felt icy breath on his face. Slowly he opened his eyes and saw the pale face of a white-haired old man with a goatee beard gazing down at him. Thinking it was a burglar, Jeremiah screamed out and leapt out of bed. But the old man, dressed all in white, disappeared - through the bedroom-wall. That was four months ago. Today Jeremiah O'Leary, his wife Christine, and two-year-old son Stephen are living with Christine's mother in Eltham, because they are afraid of going back to their haunted flat in Barnfield Gardens, Plumstead.

Said 21-year-old Christine: "This was not the first time we were visited by the ghost. Soon after we moved in 18 months ago, I was in the kitchen when I felt something cold brush the back of my legs. Some months later, the lights kept switching themselves on and off, and Stephen, who always slept like a log, began screaming every night. When I finally told my husband that the place was haunted, he laughed at me. But now he has seen it, he is convinced. I can't live here anymore. I'm a bag of nerves."

The O'Learys,who did not believe in ghosts before, now want Greenwich Council to find them a new flat. "We were quite prepared to stay there for a few years, and we bought new furniture and spent more than £100 redecorating the place. So its not as though we are doing this just to get another flat." said Christine.

Ghosts or no ghosts, Greenwich Council is prepared to help. "The O'Learys are on the transfer list, but are not high priority. As far as we are concerned, they are adequately housed," said a council spokesman. "However we are sending the Area Housing Manager to have a chat with the family. The object of the exorcise,sorry, I mean exercise, is not so much to transfer them, but to investigate whether there is any substance to their story." The Barnfield flat was built before the war, but the council spokesman was unable to say if it had ever been the scene of some horrible crime.

Kentish Independant. 4 Oct 73.
Credit: Steve Moore.

STRIKE FLOATS INTO THE HAUNTED HOTEL.

The ghostly lady in white who is apparantly walking the corridors of a hotel is about to cause a strike. Three night porters claim that they are terrified by the mystery apparition. To beat their haunted feeling, they are asking the management to let them work in pairs with all the lights on. Otherwise, they say - when the ghost walks, they will walk out.

The 'phantom' of Edinburgh's 150-year-old Royal Circus hotel is a tall beautiful woman. One porter who saw her, James Brand, 42, said: " She just vanished. I was petrified." Now the porters union, the General & Municipal Workers', wants the management to call in a ghost-hunter and, if necessary, a minister to exorcise the phantom.

Daily Mirror. 24 Oct 73.
Credit: Steve Moore.

GHOST HUNTER CALLED IN TO PREVENT STRIKE.

A ghost-hunter is being called in to settle a dispute between an hotel and three of its night porters. The porters say they have been scared by a ghostly white lady flitting through the corridors at the Royal Circus Hotel in Edinburgh. And they threatened to strike unless the management got a ghost-hunter to deal with the apparition.

Daily Mirror. 25 Oct 73.
Credit: Cathy Purcell, Steve Moore.

GUN POLICE TRY TO LAY A GHOST IN DUNGEONS.

Armed police guarding Winchester's ancient Crown Court, scene of the marathon London bombs trial, thought they were ready for anything ... until a ghost came on the scene. But last night disbelieving detectives were combing the old dungeons beneath the court building on the look-out for a strange figure who 'disappeared through a wall'. They were hoping to catch a glimpse of the ghost reported to be wearing a three-cornered hat, breeches and a cut-away frock coat. The police were called in in case the ghost in 300-year-old clothing turned out to be a present day intruder. But nothing was found.

The security ghost hunt began after a prisoner from nearby Winchester Jail on a working party at the castle rushed from one of the old dungeons which he was cleaning out. Trembling and shocked, the man stammered to his guard that he had clearly seen a figure 'disappear'. While he was sent off for medical treatment, security men acted. "Whatever he saw or thought he saw, the

man's terror was genuine enough," said a prison officer. The identity of the frightened prisoner who later returned to normal working party duty, was being withheld.

Daily Express. 17 Oct 73.

The Daily Mail of the same date adds the following details. The dungeons are beneath the 13th century Great Hall courthouse, which forms part of Winchester Castle. "It is believed by some to be the seat of the legendary King Arthur's court. Sir Walter Raleigh was imprisioned there and Hanging Judge Jeffreys held one of his bloody assizes there in the 17th century after the Monmouth rebellion." The ghost is said to have disappeared through a 2ft thick wall and the reluctant witness collapsed outside the cell. (Credit: Steve Moore.)

A GHOST AT THE TURN OF A TAP.

The ghostly White Lady has abandoned her old haunt in the cellar at the Stag's Head. The old place (circa 1670s) at Penn Common, Wolverhampton, will never be the same without her. For one thing the customers will no longer have their beer cut off without warning. She was always leaving them short. "She must have had some mechanical knowledge," said the landlord Harry Urwin yesterday, "She knew exactly how to do it. The beer would stop suddenly and I would find the taps turned off in the cellar. I would turn them on, and then without any explanation, they would go off again. Once this happened 22 times in a month. It must have been the ghost because there is only one entrance to the cellar and no one could get down there without everyone in the pub knowing."

Turning off the taps was about the worst mischief the White Lady ever did. The landlords daughter, Christine, 18, spotted her once from the top of the cellar steps. "I saw a woman in the form of a grey cloud on a barrel. I was pretty frightned. She moved across the cellar and disappeared." Now the White Lady has disappeared once more, this time, it seems, for good. For nothing has been heard of her since builders came in to do some alterations.

Daily Mail. 27 Dec 72.
Credit: Steve Moore.

healing & cures

WOMEN FLOCK TO THE FERTILE STONE.

Thousands of women are travelling from all parts of Europe to sit on a stone - because they believe it makes them pregnant. The stone is part of a temple built in 700 BC to a goddess of fertility and love in Paestum, near Naples. Reports got round that women who sat astride the 3ft carved stone, as if on horseback, had later experienced 'miracluous pregnancies'. Tourists, including some from Britain, began to join the queue at the stone as the word spread.

Mrs. Nora Colasanti of Verona said: "I was married for 14 years and my husband and I desperately wanted a child. But we had no success until I sat astride the stone at Paestum. Two months later I was pregnant." Camp-site manager Donato Stromillo, who has seen his business rocket since the story spread, said: "It's just a common stone, like many others you find at Paestum. But women seem to think it has special powers of fertilisation . The women sit astride the stone for as long as they like. You would be amazed how many have come back later with a baby in their arms."

Sunday People. 28 Oct 73.
Credit: Mrs J Adams.

BIRTH OF THE BLUES.

Family planners who taught Aboriginal women in South Australia a song giving advice on contraception have hit a snag - the women think all they have to do to avoid pregnancy is to sing the song.

Sunday Mirror. 21 Oct 73.

'heavens above'

KOHOUTEK.

The comet due at Christmas will begin to be seen as a pale smudge in the eastern sky, but it is hurtling through space at nearly 100,000 mph, trailing a tail 30 million miles long. The best naked eye viewing time will be after sunset and following New Year's Day. The Skylab crew will be the first men to observe a comet from outside the earth's atmosphere, who will have their telescopes trained on it all the time and take thousands of pictures. They will try to obtain 3D photographs with the aid of apparatus on earth. No one alive today will see the comet again - its next visit will be in 10,000 years time.
(Condensed from Sunday Express. 4 Nov 73).

At the end of November the comet will be visible just above the south-eastern horizon, and just before dawn from all over Britain. The comet was discovered by Czech astronomer Lubos Kohoutek in March this year at the Hamburg Observatory. It is expected to miss earth by about 75 million miles. It has a head half the size of the moon, and its tail will streak across one-sixth of the night sky. Observatories around the world will study where it came from and what it is made of. A favourite theory is that the core of ice, rock, gas, metal and dust came from near the outermost planets Uranus and Neptune. Across America, planetariums are planning special attractions. The Morehead Planetarium of North Carolina is taking advantage to show that the Star of Bethlehem was not a comet. The QE2 departs New York on Dec 9th for a three day amateur astronomer cruise with lecturers and telescopes on board. The London Planetarium is ignoring the event.
(Condensed from Sunday Times. 11 Nov 73.)

The Russians will be observing 'Kogoutek' from special observatories on the slopes of Tien Shan, not far from Alma-Ata, the Kazakh capital.

Novosti Bulletin 14474. 19 Nov 73.

RIDDLE OF PLANET'S BREATHING CLOUDS.

Venus is becoming increasingly mysterious. So thickly clouded is the planet that astronomers have never been able to glimpse the surface. Now however, they have discovered that the whole atmosphere of the planet moves up and down, almost as if the planet were breathing. This strange discovery has been reported by a research team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, USA, using special infra-red equipment on Table Mountain.

The team say that the Venusian cloud pulses up and down over a distance of two thirds of a mile. But they do not know why. Dr Louise Young says: "We seem to be observing a fundamental feature of atmospheric dynamics that is not explained in terms of atmospheric current or circulation. An extremely large amount of energy must be available to cause the movement. It is difficult to see where it can come from on so slowly a revolving planet."

Sunday Express. 5 Aug 73.
Credit: DJ McAllister.

RADIO SIGNALS FROM SPACE.

Soviet scientists have recorded radio signals from space that they have never received before. These signals were recorded first in Gorky, on the Volga, and later in other cities, but it is too soon to say if they are natural or artificially-produced signals, and it is clear they are not from any artificial satellite. The signals come in pulses after definite lapses of time; they last for several minutes and are repeated several times a day.

The search for radio emissions from space has been conducted under the guidance of Vsevolod Troitsky since 1970. Observations over the entire hemisphere are conducted in the centimetre and decimetre wavebands. The search for signals is conducted simultaneously from four points lying far apart from one another.

More than 30 Soviet scientists are now searching in earnest for signals from extra-terrestrial civilisations. The pulses received will be studied for several years.

Novosti Bulletin. 14394. 17 Oct.73.

THE HEAVENLY HUNT FOR A 20,000-YEAR OSTRICH.

For thousands of years, a remote colony of Bolivian Indians have gathered once a year to dance and drink for days. Why? They have forgotten, they told archaeologist George Michanowsky. But astronomers of the Americam space programme now think that those celebrations may pin-point a cataclysm far out in space, 10,000 to 20,000 years ago.

The Indians, they believe, are commemorating the violent death of a star - a super H-bomb explosion that blazed up in the sky and for a few months would have been as bright as the moon. John Brandt, one of the NASA astronomers who did the detective work told me: "If this is right - and their is no obvious argument against it - it would be the closest explosion to earth that we have identified."

The astronomers started the hunt when they found a giant wisp of gas, the so-called Gum Nebula, surrounding one of the mysterious pulsars that flash like a lighthouse many times a second. It was in the constellation Vela, in the southern sky, and it was very like the debris left when a star comes to a violent end, part of it exploding out into space, the rest collapsing into an unimaginably dense and tiny 'crushed' star - the pulsar.

The Vela space catastrophe should have been nearer, and more spectacular, than any of the four such explosions historically recorded, the astronomers argued. But there was no record of it until the astronomers called in the archaeologists and advertised for anything that could conceivably be a primitive record of an explosion in the sky. Their advertisement stirred the memory of Michanowsky. He had first recorded this unexplained Indian rite nearly 20 years before. And it had seemed to be associated with ancient carvings on a rock, of which he could make no sense.

For there were four small circles which fitted a rough cross of stars in the sky - and a larger circle, in the place where the bright star Canopus can be seen. There was a still larger circle nearby - at a point where nowadays we see no star at all, but very close to the mysterious Gum Nebular and its pulsar. Could this be a primitive record that once a very bright star had blazed up at this point? Nowadays this bit of sky looks very unremarkable. Yet it still has some special meaning for the Indians who call it the Gateway to Hell. According to another legend, one of their sacred symbols, the Heavenly Ostrich, was hunted across the sky by savage dogs and killed at this point. Michanowsky hopes, by radiocarbon dating the rock with the carving, to put a date within a few hundred years to this closest-ever explosion. The Hunt of the Heavenly Ostrich has become a quest for one of the strange experiences that primitive man recorded without comprehension.

Daily Mirror. 27 Oct 73. Article by A Macpherson.
Credit: Steve Moore.

PLASMA NEAR THE MOON.

Cosmic plasma was discovered on the lighted side of the moon when space near the moon was explored by Luna-19. Professor Mikhail Kolesnov of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of Radio Engineering and Electronics says that the maximum concentration of the matter was at an altitude of 10 kilometres from the lunar surface - but even at that attitude it is much less than on the earth, he says. The origin of plasma near planets is still unknown and scientists have different opinions about this. Many believe that plasma is affected greatly by solar wind, on which the concentration and distribution of space plasma around the earth depends.

Novosti Bulletin 14347. 3 Oct 73.

mysterious moon by nigel watson

With the advent of lunar exploration by men and vehicles, there has been greater scientific interest in our nearest celestial body than ever before - so it is interesting to find that since the 19th century, astronomers throughout the world have observed many strange manifestations which apparently seem to be emanating from the moon's surface.

One such observation was made during an eclipse of the moon, on September 7th, 1820. Many astronomers reported seeing the same thing; strange objects which were apparently moving in straight lines and evenly spaced, crossing the face of the moon slowly, and turning in what was described as military precision.

In 1837, a selenographer startled astronomers by producing a map with a 65-mile-long area with what looked like a white cross in the centre, located on the edge of the Mare Frigoris. This particular object was worked out to be 250 to 350 above the lunar surface.

One object that moved across the moon on 30th September, 1870, was reported in the London Times, and described as elliptical in shape with a kind of tail, crossing from one side of the moon to the other in half a minute. A similar event was reported in the American journal Popular Astronomy on 27th January 1912, in which a Dr. Harris described an intensely black object which he observed crossing the moon. With slight under-statement he said: "I think a very interesting and curious phenomenon happened last night."

In my own study of Lincolnshire UFO reports, I have found many such reports of elliptical objects seen crossing the moon - due to lunar illumination these objects are only seen when they are between the observer and the moon. A typical report from my files is the observation made on 19th November 1953 by a 31-year-old steelrigger whilst going home from the Appleby-Frodingham steelworks. He saw a huge elliptical object gliding across the moon from left to right - it was 1/6th the diameter of the moon and its length was seven times its width.

On the matter of observed objects on the moon itself, I came across a report that in 1871 an astronomer gave the Royal Astronomical Society a file of 1,600 observations he had made of light changes, moving objects, flashing lights and geometrical patterns inside Plato crater.

I contacted the RAS and their librarian, Dr. EW Maddison, kindly sent me the following reply: "The matter of 1,600 (it is sometimes given as 2,000) observations of flashing lights on the moon is a perennial one. It would seem from enquiries that I have made, that the statement has no foundation. I have found no reference in this Society's publications that members of this Society made these observations between 1869 to 1871; and there is no mention in the Catalogue of Lunar Events by B. Middlehurst et al, (NASA Technical Report R-277, 1968), which is pretty exhaustive as a chronological survey of the phenomena you are enquiring about.

I have been given to understand that the story originates in The Books of Charles Fort, an American publication which is not in this library and which I have not seen; and as so often happens, the story has been repeated uncritically ever since. The story is probably a garbled version of Brit's observations on the crater Pluto, and his reports to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1871 and 1872."

Coming up to the present day, in 1959, Lee Munsic of Denville, New Jersey took a picture of what appeared to be flying saucers marching towards the moon, although the US Air Force quickly identified them as 'static electricity'.

One explanation for the lights observed on the lunar surface by astronomers is that they are 'gas emissions' called Transient Lunar Phenomena (TLP). Indeed, Patrick Moore has done much to catalogue the TLPs.

We shall now mention yet another puzzling manifestation on the moon's surface. In November 1966, a US space probe sent Lunar Orbiter 11 on a survey mission to the moon. On 21st November, from a height of 30 miles above the lunar surface, its camera zoomed in on a small section of the Sea of Tranquility, relaying back to Earth pictures of what appeared to be six spike-like shadows.

Although most scientists have remained content with the theory that these structures are probably due to some natural occurrence, some think differently. Mr. William Blair, a Seattle anthropologist and member of the Boeing biotechnology department, has stated that the 'spires' form a geometric pattern, similar to columns built by man.

In reply to this theory, an expert on lunar topography said that by picking some at random (because there are so many of these rocks on the moon) you would, as in this particular case, eventually find a group that would conform to a pattern. Mr. Blair said that if this were the case, much more than half of the present known Aztec and Mayan architecture would still be sitting in tree-studded undergrowth.

So to re-cap: astronomers have seen what is probably natural geological activity, TLPs; satellites in orbit around the moon have recorded strange structures on its surface; and people have reported UFOs crossing the sky against the moon's illumination.

** * **

Nigel Watson is Chairman of the Scunthorpe UFO Research Society (SUFORS).

human curiosities

MARK SLEEPWALKS ON THE ROOF.

Schoolboy Mark Henderson yawned and woke up to the biggest audience of his life yesterday. He woke up to find himself perched 40ft up on the roof of his home in Accrington Road, Burnley. Dressed in his pyjamas and fast asleep, Mark, 14, had climbed out of his attic bedroom through a tiny window. Still asleep, we walked 10ft down wet, slippery slates to the edge of the roof above their backyard. Neighbours spotted him and called the emergency services. He was rescued by firemen and returned to bed, shaken but no worse for his 'night out'.

Daily Mail. 18 Sept 73.
Credit: DJ McAllister.

WHY THE DOCTORS ARE UP IN THE AIR OVER HENRI.

Henri Rochatain was so tired that he slept on a clothesline - probably the only man who has ever done it. Now doctors are trying to fathom out how he managed to snooze without falling off. You might think M. Rochatain is a nut - once he walked 4000 miles around France on a pair of stilts - but his exploits fascinate doctors because they push human endurance beyond limits previously thought possible.

He has just come down from a tightrope, 82ft up above a carpark in Saint Etienne, France. He lived for six months on the rope, fitted with a covered toilet and a board bed - but these were simply balanced along the line, there was nothing holding them there. "It is fantastic that he managed to sleep at all," said Dr. Paul Monet, whose team had Rochatain wired up with electrodes to monitor reactions. "He slept well even in thunderstorms and high winds. It is quite astonishing that he could rest, knowing that if he turned over in the night he would plunge off the rope."

He spent most days walking up and down, and occasionaly doing stunts, like standing on his head or pretending to fall off. His menu was sparse - seaweed soup, biscuits and tea. A local supermarket presented him with a fat fee for using the tightrope attraction as an advertisement.

Daily Mail. 4 Oct 73. From article by W. Lowther.
Credit Steve Moore.

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE AS WILD CATMAN POUNCES.

The scatty antics of the phantom ginger catman are making nights a misery for families on a caravan site. The man has a mop of ginger hair, and wears a black coat and plimsolls. After lights out he bounds through the site banging on the caravans and smashing windows. He even stamps along the roofs. His nasty acrobatics have forced wives and children to huddle in fear in one caravan while their husbands stand guard outside.

The catman has been seen several times but he has given his pursuers the slip by dodging into the woods surrounding the site at Wyatts Covert, Denham, Bucks. "He outruns everybody," said Mrs. Jacqueline Davies, one of the caravan wives. "He's obviously very athletic and moves like a cat. You never hear him approach. He seems to enjoy the chase. One night he leapt straight over a six foot fence, then found a police-car blocked his way. Even that didn't stop him. He just jumped over the bonnet of the car and disappeared".

Mrs. Davies, a 25-year-old mother of three, said: "We can't take much more of this. I've not had a proper night's sleep in 3 weeks. We simply dare-not go to bed with this man around. Things have got so bad that I've had to send my son Daren to live with my mother. We've done everything we can - even rigging up temporary searchlights, but this still hasn't stopped him. If something isn't done soon we plan to go to Gerrards Cross police station with our children and sit-in there until this man is caught."

Mr Brian Knight, deputy housing manager for Eton Rural Council, owners of the caravan site, said: "We have given residents permission to cut down undergrowth which has been providing cover for the prowler." A police spokesman at Gerrards Cross said: "We have sent men and dogs to the site but so far we have not managed to catch the prowler. He moves so quickly."

News of the World. 4 Nov 73.

... and with one bound he was free, eh!

PLAYTIME FOR A GIRL WHO 'DIED'.

Four-year-old Jacqueline Rumble was playing in a Hull, Yorks, park yesterday, just 24 hours after she 'died' for 15 minutes. Firemen revived her with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation after a blaze destroyed her home. Sunday Express. 21 Oct 73.

INFO

Continuing the work of **Charles Fort** into the intriguing, ever-puzzling universe in which we live, the **INFO Journal** is a compendium of data on UFOs and other things seen in and out of the skies: sea monsters, poltergeists, objects dug up that "shouldn't be there"—and who knows what? If you have an exploring spirit not hypnotized by the "experts" write to:

Robert J. M. Rickard, 31 Kingswood Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9AN, England.

or

INFO, P.O. Box 367, Arlington, Virginia, 22210 U.S.A.

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ROSE SNORES BACK TO LIFE IN HER COFFIN.

The mourners grieved for old Rose Hanover as she was laid in her coffin. But two hours later old Rose started to snore... and gave the undertaker the fright of his life. He opened the coffin lid and saw that 85-year-old Mrs. Hanover was alive and breathing. He covered her with a blanket, dialled 999 and she was taken to hospital. A spokesman for the North Middlesex hospital said that she was much improved but that she did not know what had happened to her.

Daily Mirror. 16 April 73.

CRASH VICTIM TAKES HIS ARM TO HOSPITAL.

Nurses fainted in horror when motorcyclist George Bereza walked into hospital after a road accident - carrying his left arm tucked under his right arm. It had been torn off at the elbow in a collision with a van. George, 19, hitch-hiked to the hospital near Johannesburg, where doctors tried to sew the forearm back, but had to remove it again a few hours later.

George said later: "The nurses keeled over or scattered when I walked into the hospital, bleeding all over the place. I had to walk by myself to casualty. When I got there I passed out." Several drivers he stopped wouldn't take him: "I assume they didn't want their cars messed up."

Daily Mirror. 24 Sept 73.
Credit: Steve Moore.

WATTS SHE GOT THAT SPARKS 'EM OFF?

"Please help me with an old problem I have on my hands. It's just that I seem to have the knack of switching off electrical gadgets without even touching them! During my holidays, for example, I tried to dry my hands in the hot air machine in a ladies loo - only to find that it turned itself off right away, though it worked for everyone else. I even took my rings and shoes off, but it made no difference. Its the same story with automatic ticket machines on the Underground. They always reject my ticket. I also have a funny effect on transistor radios, which go static when I walk past. Can any of your readers come up with an answer? My friends are calling me 'spooky'.

Mrs. R Heath. Bedford Hill, Balham,
London SW12."

Daily Mirror. 24 Oct 73. Letters to Codgers.
Credit: Robert Forrest, Anthony Smith.

monsters

ROUND ONE TO NESSIE.

After the long catalogue of disappointments in this comedy of errors, the Japanese Loch Ness Monster Search Party has packed up and retired. Finances, originally described as 'unlimited', finally dried up - but fear not, the intrepid team from Tokyo will be back again next Spring, with a remote-controlled submarine containing photographic gear and computers.

Yoshio Kou, styled Chief Producer, famous (in Japan) Chinese-born impressario, said: "Despite what local people think, we have not wasted our time. We have much data, and the crew we will send over next year will know much about Loch Ness. We know now what can be seen under the surface of the water, and it is very little. But our computers should do better than a submarine with men aboard.

The expedition, which cost £250,000 and comprised 15 submariners, scientists and zoologists, were described (in the quaint genre-language of the show-biz paper Variety,5 Sept 73) as in a race with a team from the Boston Academy of Applied Science, and "the first to capture the monster-lass on film for world television stands to win lotsa coin."

One man who won't be sorry to see them go is Frank Searle, who claims to have seen the monster more than 20 times from his loch-side tent. Robert Glenton, in an article (with pics) on the Lady of the Loch (Sunday Express. 16 Sept 73.) wonders if we can call Mr. Searle potty. "Well, if arms and a face that glow as brown as shining chestnut, eyes as clear as a summer sky, and utter contentment are signs of lunacy, then the sooner some of us are certified the better." In one newspaper report (which we seem to have lost) Mr. Searle was commenting somewhat sarcasticly, that when the Japanese sub attempt failed, they took to steaming up and down the Loch in a noisy fishermans boat hired out of Drumnadrochit.

Apart from the dated pieces, most of the above is drawn from the last news mention of the caper, Daily Express. 8 Nov 73. Credit: Steve Moore.

AND NOW ..... A MONSTER IN THE MIDLANDS.

Could this be a scoop for the NEWS?- if so then praise be to Anthony Smith, NEWS reader extraordinary.

The first news of this rival to Nessie and Morag comes from the Express & Star, 21 May 1973. Three members of a Dudley Diving Club were disturbed while carrying out a survey of the lake on the Earl of Bradford's estate at Weston-under-Lizard (of all splendid names). David Gale, the club instructor, said that they were doing a survey of all the lakes on the estate, with Pat Smith and Chris Lander. They were in about 10 feet of water near the centre of Norton Mere three-quarters of a mile long, when they saw the wake of something large moving below the surface. "There was a large disturbance of mud just ahead - so big that Chris thought one of us had got in front.

We were all amazed to see such a large wake. It certainly must have been made by something quite big."

Mr Gale said the three of them made a search but were unable to trace what had made the wake. He said that it could have been a very large eel or perhaps a big pike for Norton Mere has provided the biggest pike caught on the estate.

nice one, Colin!

Turn to last page.....for the full story!!!

Some weeks later there is a bigger article in the Express & Star (5 June 73). The stately home was built in 1671 by Lady Wilbraham, and the parklands in the 1,500 acre estate were laid out by Capability Brown. Much joking from the sixth earl Lord Bradford: "Goodness knows what it is but it is a big one. No-one in the family has ever mentioned the monster being in the mere, but they say it is something like whatever is in Loch Ness. It should also prove a great rival to Lord Montagu's motor museum at Beaulieu.

A band of 20 divers meet early in the morning to search the mere. The main group from Dudley Diving Group, led by David Gale, and the Wulfruna Sub Aqa Club, led by Dave Crockett. They would divide and start from opposite ends, driving the whatever toward the side banks. The foothills of Tong were heavy with silence, and the occasional flash of a florescent diving hood breaking the surface - the waiting was terrible.

Suddenly, a scream rent the air. Miss Pat Smith sent wildfowl scattering with her cry - an eel had bitten her foot. The search was resumed, and a second team joined the first in swimming in ever decreasing circles. All manner of fish and even a small sunken forest was found - but alas no monster. The experienced evasion tactics of its northern cousin were in evidence, and very little else. We wonder if we've heard the last?

plant curiosities

GIANT SEAWEED INVADES THE SOUTH.

We are a little late with this one, but the headline is quite attractive. South coast resorts are being threatened by a plague of giant seaweed capable of growing an inch a day and up to 30 ft long. 'The weed, a relative of the legendary peril of the Sargasso Sea, forms huge mats which can squeeze out marine life, destroy oyster beds, and foul fishing lines and propellers. 'How it got to Britain is a mystery - the theories range from being brought on the bottom of a boat, or in a consignment of Japanese oysters grown in France.' Figure that one out! 'Marine botanist, Dr. Bill Farnham, leader of the volunteer group fighting the menace said: "The only way we can get rid of it is to pull it up by hand - and that's a long job." Portsmouth is the port worst hit. Dr Farnham found the weed clinging to the bottom of the Royal Yaught Brittania. "It's very bad. Worse than Bembridge, Isle of Wight, where it was found last month. We think its fertile period is during Spring and Summer. But it could be all the year round."'

Express & Star. 28 July 73.
Credit: Anthony Smith.

A RASH OF GIANT VEGETABLES.

60-year-old Eric Jenkins, of Shipston-on-Stour, who already holds the record for growing the world's largest dwarf bean (look this is meant to be serious - just take a peek at the note on trivia-collecting in Uncle Chao's column) has now notched himself another place in the record books by growing 370¼lb of potatoes from one seed. He uses the fertilizer on himself too. With impeccable logic he reckons that what is good for the spuds is good for him - and takes a couple of drops in water every day. If he finds himself rooted in his allotment one day he has only himself to blame - in the meantime his fingers are proverbially green. Eric is out for the record of 20001b of potatoes from 6 seeds - he just failed (if you can call that failure) with 15481b. From Sunday Mercury 14 Oct 73.

Next we have Ernie Jones and the biggest onion in the world - a swelling 5lb 15¾oz. Grown at his home in Llanfyllin, near Welshpool, Montgomeryshire, it beat the previous world record by two ounces. From Sunday Mirror 14 Oct 73.

And now a monster carrot, a foot long, nearly a

foot in circumference and weighing 31b. All you SF buffs can breath easy, because this one isn't on the move - its in the garden of Arnold Dixon, at Trunch in Norfolk.

We hate to seem like alarmists, but we don't think Alex Finer's remarks in his article on Kohoutek (Sunday Times 11 Nov 73) are as smart as they sound. He says: "Unlike John Wyndham's classic science fiction fantasy, the comet's brightness is not expected to damage human eyes or to be followed by the appearance of Triffids." All the same - if we were you, we wouldn't go down the bottom of our garden until well after March next year.

possession & curses

IT WAS IN THE STARS.

'Expect a windfall this week' said Mrs Rosalyn Palmer's horoscope. But it wasn't quite what the 57-year-old district nurse expected. Within 3 days it came true - literally. She went to visit her sister Marjorie Palmer, who was born under the same sign, and who was in hospital after breaking her right leg at her home just hours after reading the same 'scope. Miss Rosalyn, of Bolton, Lancs, was caught by a gust of wind as she came down the hospital steps, and broke her own leg.

Daily Mail 28 May 73.
Credit: Steve Moore.

THE HOUSE OF HORROR.

Mrs Penelope Gallereault, 26, lived in a flat in the Victorian-Gothic country house of Oakley Court, on the banks of the river Thames at Bray, Berks. They were warned by friends before they moved in that the place was spooky and frequently used by Hammer Films as a location for Dracula or Frankenstein. And in those three years she and her husband and children suffered many tragedies. Her marriage has broken up and two of her four children are dead.

The horror began in the summer of 1972. "I started to see people walking in the grounds wearing hoods," she says. Then one morning she found a box on their doorstep - and inside, the body of one of her cats, with its neck broken. And in December her two-year-old son, William, died. Mrs Gallerneault was running hime a bath, when the phone went. When she returned he was floating in the water. "I realise that many people might try to blame me for being careless, but that is just not the case. In a rambling old house like that, there are so many precautions you have to take." Then early last month, her son Edward, who was just two, was left in his playpen in the grounds. Somehow he got out, toddled down to the river, fell in and drowned.

The other residents at Oakley Court remember two more deaths. A man fell from a pleasure steamer in 1971 and drowned in the same stretch of river as young Edward. And an old lady, whose body lay in her flat in the Court,was found in November 1972 after at least a week. Mrs Gallerneault said "The house has an aura of evil and I could never go back there. Horror films being made there seem like a joke. I'm sure evil has rubbed off on the place." The Rev. Sebastian Jones, Curate of St. Michaels Church, Bray, added: "Oakley Court is definitely 'spooky' and I would not want to stay there myself. Evil can generate evil, and the grounds would be an ideal place to practise Black Magic." The police, called in at every stage, are mystified too. A senior policeman said: "There have been some strange happenings at the house, which have never been explained. We made regular patrols after complaints about witches, and things seem to have quietned down now. We never discovered how Mrs Gallerneault's cats died or who killed them."

The above story is from the News of the World 30 Sept 73. All of us cynics and pessimists know the phenomena of 'Famous Last Words'. The world's a stage, it seems. 'Things' have their entrances and exits - and their cues. 'Things' that are said to have died down, take it into their heads (probably under their arms) to start up again. As the News of the World went to press, back at Oakley Court, Mr William Griffiths, 40, was sailing past and trying to fix his boat's windscreen. He fell in and drowned - in the same spot as the other two deaths. This addition from News of the World 7 Oct 73.

HUMAN VAMPIRE ATTACKED ME, SAYS PRIEST.

A Church of England priest who claims to exorcise evil spirits says that he has been attacked by a human vampire. The Rev. Donald Ormand alleges that the vampire is a 22-year-old man with a history of attacking people with his teeth or nails to get at their blood.

The 70-year-old priest pointed to his own marked lips and said: "It was the most terrifying experience of my life. One moment he was talking quite rationally. The next, he had leapt at me - his face diabolical. He scratched my lips and had to be overpowered. He openly admitted that he got an extacy from sucking blood. It might be only a coincidence - but it's curious that the man's mother came from Transylvania - the very place where Dracula is said to have lived."

Dr. Ormand, of Honiton, Devon, talked to the man after being approached by psychiatrists at a Scandinavian nursing home. "I had previously worked with them as an exorcist." Dr. Ormand said the man had attacked other patients in the home. "What is even more terrible is that his victims then betrayed signs of the same vampire tendancies. I exorcised him,the day after he attacked me, with salt and water, and with those prayers which are used by the Church in such ceremonies.

"The next day he could remember nothing of his vampire history and the doctors are so convinced that the evil has been exorcised that they wanted to release him. But I suggested they should try to get him to stay as a voluntary patient for another six months. I cannot rule out the chance of re-possession." Since flying back to Britain

last weekend, Dr. Ormand has been in constant contact with the doctors. "It's curious that Dracula is another name for the Devil, but this was the first time I've come up against someone possessed by this vampire evil."

News of the World. 28 Oct 73.
Credit: Mrs J Adams. Anthony Smith.

ripley or not!

THE GAME OF THE NAME.

We remember (with affection) an incident quoted by Fort in which three people called Green, Berry and Hill, were hanged on Greenberry Hill. Well, we seem to have collected a few more of such 'coincidences'. Reader Robert Forrest sent us a note from the Daily Mirror 22 Oct 73 which says: ' The Queen's visit to Australia to open the Sydney Opera House saw a bonanza for "Coincidence Punters". A horse called Opera House won at 5-2 on Friday. On Saturday Queen Hawa won at 4-1, Melody Prince at 5-2, and Rule Britannia at 5-2.' On the same cutting is a note that Members of the Government's new regional water authorities now include a Mr Wells, Mr Pipe, Mr Gill and Sir Samuel Fisher.

To this bizarre pastime of thumbing through Government directories we can add our own not insignificant talents for scanning dead newspapers. The Daily Express 26 Oct 73 yields the information that the Somerset Police force now includes Constables Michael Fox, Christopher Woolf, John Doe (really) and Keith Rabbitts. And from the Express again, 15 Oct 73, one of the best specimens of roach ever caught at Farndon Harbour, Notts, was landed by an angler called Salmon.

scientific curiosities

TWINS BY DIFFERENT FATHERS.

An Austrian Supreme Court ruling has allowed that twins can have different fathers. Blood tests had shown that a man could not be the father of one twin - a girl - in a remarkable paternity case heard in Vienna. But the Court decided that it was technically possible for him to have fathered the other, a boy. In this case twins from separate ova could have separate fathers. This modern judgement of Solomon can be found in the Sunday People for 21 Oct 73.

OUT OF SPACE.

This is being typed (appropiately) as news is coming through of the discovery of bacteria that can thrive in alkalis, and so might exist in various forms on Jupiter. The Lovecraftian head above is from a note from the Daily Mirror 10 Aug 73, sent by DJ McAllister. It mentions that the two Nobel prizewinners Francis Crick and Leslie Orgel were 'today' publishing their theory on panspermia - that life on earth was seeded from elsewhere in space. They base their theory on two facts. First, that all living creatures on earth, including plants, have the element molybdenum in their make-up. And secondly that the cells of all living creatures carry another element that decides the shape, size and other characteristics. Crick and Orgel 'doubt whether these two astonishing likenesses can be either accident or coincidence. "There may be as yet unsuspected features which might point to a special type of planet as the home of our ancestors"!'

THE SEARCH FOR THE 114th ELEMENT IN NATURE.

Soviet scientists are embarking on a programme to locate the 114th element of the Mendeleyev table. It has not yet been synthesized in any laboratory but they say it should exist in nature. It is an analogue of lead, the most stable element in the system. The scientists think that it should be sought in the most unlikely places, eg. ancient lead glass, or at a great depth near volcanoes.

Novosti Bulletin 14325. 25 Sept 73.

SOVIET EARTH-MAPPING FROM SPACE.

Soviet scientists have produced the first geological map, based on photographs taken by Soyuz 9. The scale of the map is one millionth and covers 8,000 sq. km. In a press interview, Prof. Sergei Strelnikov said that unlike the existing maps of the same area the new one shows some hitherto unknown regularities in the geological structure of the earth. For instance, the photos show for the first time that this planet has ring-shaped structures which formed in antiquity and which resemble lunar craters.

These formations, with diameters of up to 100 kilometres, have been destroyed to a considerable extent and it is hard to discover them on earth. The scientist assumes they have much in common with similar lunar formations in terms of origin.

Novosti Bulletin 14381. 12 Oct 73.

It seems that the map is confined to an area of Central Asia - but this should be of some interest to Ley Hunters and others, at least.

TEST TUBE BABY HUNT.

Following the death of Professor Daniele Petrucci, 51, in mid-October police and scientists in Italy are anxious to find out if his claims were true. Nine years ago he announced that he had perfected test-tube fertilization in artificial wombs under pressurized oxygen, and the subsequent embedding of the foetus into the real or host mother. Italy has strict laws against artificial insemination, and Petrucci retired from public life to continue his experiments at his own expense.

In 1964, he came to a special conference on the use of oxygen pressure chambers in medicine, and was cut short in mid-speech by ridicule and told that his lecture was irrelevant to the theme. But before his death the professor shocked Italy by disclosing that he had created 27 babies successfully by this method. In referring to British experiments, he said, in a rare interview: "By the time their first one is born, my first

one will be married." In his final years, the professor said he was concentrating on cancer research and techniques for exploring inside the human body. A top American gynaecologist who secretly interviewed him said later: "I've seen and heard some things which were quite fantastic!" From News of the World. 21 Oct 73.

'so what else is new?'

Like most of our categories this one is simply a very loose grouping of notes - here, dealing with the survival, re-invention or re-discovery of what is now popularly presented as an ancient technology - literally, applied knowledge.

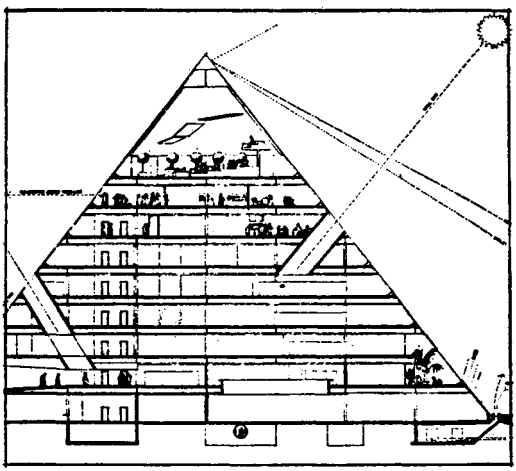
PEACE BY THE STARS.

A Laos peace treaty was signed at 9.40 am. precisely yesterday - because an astrologer told Prime Minister Souvanna this gave the pact the best chance of success. The treaty signed by the Government and the Communist Pathet Lao ends 10 years of war. Diplomats from the US, China, North Vietnam and South Vietnam witnessed the ceremony which ended with a champagne toast.

Daily Mail. 15 Sept 73.

THE PHARAOH TOUCH.

The Sunday Times of 28 Oct. 73. carried a report by Ian Nairn on the winner of an architectural competition for Northamptonshire's proposed new county hall. The designers, Jeremy & Fenella Dixon with Edward Jones, will break even with a £7,000 prize for their 9 storey glass pyramid. "This is an imaginative idea which won't hurt the landscape. There are too few new shapes and new ideas in architecture." says Nairn - but all is not well.



"The assessor's minority report is startling too: 'Incapable of satisfactory orientation...reminiscent of a Mausoleum and the Dead Pharaohs... totally unsuited to its environment.'" Tell that to Piazzi Smith, or the builders of Silbury and so many other 'celtic' pyramids.

"Wow! And double-wow," Nairn continues," when you realise that the two dissidents are the chairmen of the County Council and of the Council's General Services Committee. We have a Sydney Opera House situation on our hands."

ARCHIMEDES' SOLAR WEAPON IS TESTED.

Athens, Nov 6: Did Archimedes, the mathematician and inventor, use solar energy to destroy the Roman fleet besieging Syracuse between 215 BC & 212 BC? The story is challenged by many historians but a Greek engineer proved today that it could have been done.

Some 50 or 60 Greek sailors at Scaramanga naval base near Athens, today aimed large oblong mirrors to focus reflected sun rays on a small wooden boat moored 160 feet away. Smoke appeared within seconds and soon the boat was on fire.

Dr. Ioannis Sakkas had been puzzled about Archimedes' 'burning mirror' legend ever since reading about it in Anthemius's 'Remarkable Devices'. Anthemius of Tralles was one of the planners of the sixth-century church of St. Sophia in Constantinople. Earlier there had been vague references to the event in Polybius, Plutarch, and Lucian's 'Hippias'.

"Archimedes may have employed flat bronze mirrors the size of large shields, from the walls of the city to concentrate the solar energy and set the Roman galleys on fire," Dr Sakkas said. "The flat mirrors are, for this purpose, the most practical as they can be handled by men obeying commands.

"You can visualise the scene: the Roman ships would hold as they converged towards the 60 foot high walls of Syracuse within bowshot. The element of surprise was probably crucial, since the target had to be static. The defenders with their shield-like mirrors would focus the reflection of the sun on each galley and set it on fire within seconds."

In today's experiment, Dr Sakkas used between 50 and 60 mirrors of bronze-coated glass, each measuring 5ft by 3ft. They were held by a line of sailors along a narrow pier opposite the target. The doctor explained: "The reflective power would be about one-tenth less than the polished bronzes Archimedes would have employed, and the sun today was fairly weak. The heat generated today must have ranged between 280°C & 340°C."

The target was a 6ft navy rowing boat, one side covered by the outline of a galley made of tarred plywood. The board of slow-burning wood caught fire about two-minutes after the mirrors were beamed on it. This was the fourth successful experiment arranged by Dr Sakkas with the help of the Technical Chamber of Greece. Earlier trials on land involved the use of 50 mirrors which, at a distance of 130ft, set the target on fire within three seconds.

Times. 7 Nov 73.
Credit: Clive Million.

ufos

UFO IN RADNORSHIRE, WALES.

Reader Phil Ledger was listening to BBC Welsh regional radio news on the 18th Sept and caught a reference to a UFO sighting. He managed to track down the witness and wrote to him. He sent us the witness's reply dated 27 Sept 73.:

'Further to your letter concerning the UFO, I now give the following details. There were seven of us present at the time, we all saw it, and agree the following: Date: 17 Sept 73. Time; approximately 2030 hrs. Location; Lakeside, Llandrindod, Wells, Radnorshire. Weather: Clear and very bright.

The object was first seen when directly overhead and it travelled in a northerly direction. The sighting from directly over head to the horizon, was approximately 1 minute duration. All that was apparent was a light approximately twice as bright as the stars. The light itself was steady. It was not accompanied by other lights, eg. navigation lights. The course appeared to vary slightly either side of a straight line. The light was 'whitish', similar to the stars. There was no apparent sound, and there was no resultant trail. Military aircraft on manouvres are a frequent sight in this area, and we have all observed these, and civil aircraft in parts at night. The basic dis-similarity between what we saw on this occasion and those aircraft, convinced us that this was different.

Yours etc. RT Long.
12 Llais-yr-Afon, Garth,
Llangammarch Wells, Breconshire. '

RIDDLE OF GHOST SOS FLARES.

Mysterious distress flares being fired in the Channel are threatening to disrupt rescue services off the Kent coast. Coastguards, lifeboats and inshore rescue craft have wasted hours answering distress calls and found no one in need of help. Police are working on the theory that a gang of smugglers is deliberately drawing attention to one part of the coast while landing their illegal cargo or immigrants elsewhere. Dungeness lifeboat coxswain Tom Tart, 58, said yesterday: " On both times we were called out last month, visibility was perfect, but we found no trace of anyone in distress. The danger is that while we are chasing mystery flares, there will be a genuine disaster and we shall not be able to cope with it." A Department of Trade and Industry spokesman said: "There have been too many examples of people firing distress flares when they are not in real distress. But some of the recent calls cannot be explained that way. They are a mystery."

Over the years we have noticed many reports of mysterious activity on the south coast of England - and occasionally a UFO type of light drags a lifeboat out to sea. Could this be such?
Sunday Mirror 14 Oct 73.

THE GREAT 1973 FLAP, USA, cont...

It seems that the USA is in the grip of another UFO flap - the papers over there being full of reports most days. What has trickled through the media over here has tended toward the hysterical and the supercilious. The list of 'official' sightings grows with the Governor of Ohio (Daily Mail, 19 Oct.); Air Force Chief of Staff, General George Brown, says US Forces in Vietnam were plagued with the things (Daily Mail, 25 Oct.); Senator Barry Goldwater (Daily Express, 8 Nov); and Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter (Daily Mail, 15 Sept), all this year; credit for above to Steve Moore and David McAllister.

Two 'abduction' incidents within 24 hours. Two Mississippi fishermen of Pascagoula River saw a strange object surrounded by blue haze. Creatures with crab-like hands grabbed them and dragged them into the craft. The aliens had pinkish-grey wrinkled skin, big eyes, pointed ears and noses, and no toes. The two were subjected to an examination and became weightless when touched by the creatures. (Sun. 16 Oct 73. Credit: Cathy Purcell.) (A fuller account appeared in the Guardian, but we have no date for it. Credit: Michael Start). The next day, 150 miles NWest, in Louisiana, at Slidell, a sheriffs deputy claimed his car was attacked by 'an orange-reddish object (no! not an orange raddish.) 'Our deputies spotted them, and so did a bunch of witnesses. One of the deputies was scared pretty bad,' said Deputy Sheriff Michael Moore. The object was about 15ft in diameter and glowing red. From the Sun. 17 Oct 73.

UFO AT BARR BEACON.

The following is a letter to the editor of the Sutton News - and Barr Beacon is a prominent Ley centre just north of Birmingham.

'About two or three years ago, I was leaving my friend's cottage, late one night, in company with her and her daughter, when this 'thing' like a brilliant orange kite arose from the trees, ascending and descending slowly twice. I was rendered rather hysterical and we returned to the cottage for a while. We were in the Blake Street area facing Barr Beacon, at about 11 pm. I am quite certain there was no aircraft around at the time and the night was eerily quiet. I am not a nervous person but that night I will not forget in a hurry.

Margaret Carpenter.
69 Blackberry Lane, Four Oaks.'
Credit: Cathy Purcell.

Uncle Chao's glee club

We have a note drawn from the 'America' column of the Daily Mail (20 June 73. Credit: Steve Moore.) that a man received offers to appear as a celebrity in Las Vegas after lightning had struck him - and welded the zip on his trousers. We are reminded of our story (N1.p16.) of Ranger Roy Sullivan, who has been struck by lightning five times. In INFO 11 there are a few more details of his extraordinary story - including

one bolt blowing his shoes off without undoing the laces. There just might be something in the concept of life being the 'Sport of the Gods'. We are attracted to the notion of a Cosmic Joke Department, despite its cynical overtones, and will give it room to develop.

LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT.

Many of our notes seem trivial - we suspect that we have very little idea of what makes something 'important', or even how relevancy can be assessed regarding the total picture, which, of course, we may never know. We can only go on collecting and hoping that somethings will click with someone, somewhere, sometime. Dermot Purgavie, demon reporter for the Daily Mail, wrote the following piece, (20 Oct 73):

"A little respect if you please. You happen to be listening to one of the few people who know that if the progent of one pair of flies lived for a year, the earth would be covered by flies to a depth of 47 feet. I can't say too much more at the moment because I don't want to spoil my chances in America's National Trivia Tournament, in which 60 teams with a consuming madness for the insignificant will compete in San Francisco next month.

It is organised by Ron Myers of the California Trivia Society, an admirable man, erudite enough to share with me the knowledge that the smallest tube in the world has a bore of .00013 in. and is used for the artificial insemination of mosquitoes; and that the longest known palindrome is Saippuakauppias, which is Finnish for 'soap-seller'. I hope you will be appropriately proud when I've won, and over the cheering drift the strains of the National Anthem, which by the way was played 17 times in succession by a band on the platform of Rathenau railway station in Germany in 1909 while Edward VII was inside the train struggling into his uniform." Credit: Steve Moore.

We rather like another of the notes sent to us by the puckish Steve Moore, from the Daily Mail 16 Jan 73. 'Presumably working on the theory that the further you get from things the more objective you become, scientists are to meet to discuss 'reality' at a convention hotel in Florida's Disneyworld.

REVIEWS

BLACK HOLES - THE END OF THE UNIVERSE?
by John Taylor. Souvenir. £2.50.

Steadily since the 18th century, Science has attracted more and more of the allegiances due to the Church. Well, Forteans can only give a knowing wink about all this, because very little has changed when it comes to handing out dogma. We see that Science has its devotees and fanatics; its high priests and rituals; its prophets and heretics. That pillar of materialism, physics, becomes more like metaphysics as particles are probed for their constituents. And of course Science has its own energetic eschatology - the Big Bang; Entropy; and now the added but equally inevitable doom of the Black Holes (stars so dense they collapse, inexorably dragging in the rest of the universe).

Here, for those who missed his Horizon TV programme, is it all again, with the dubious bonus of Prof. Taylor's thoughts on mysteries ıgeneral For a scientist he is much given to sweeping generalisations on the mysteries, origins and evolution of man, though and universe. If only he'd been more careful - or stuck to the Holes he loves and knows.

The structure of his argument is that Science (man's supreme achievement) responds to a challenge - the unknown is a threat to man - the Black Hole is the ultimate unknown - and Science like Lochinvar, come riding to the rescue. "The only hope is to turn to science to get mankind out of the present chaos," he says, unassailed by nagging doubts. "In religion one has to be initiated with the faith and encouraged to make the leap of belief to accept the mysterious for what it is, as always mysterious. The scientist is trained in completely the opposite tradition, always to question how, always to penetrate the unknowable and make it clear," etc. Was that an Olympian guffaw I heard? Maybe I'm being difficult, but if it can be known, it is not unknowable - and how can I take seriously what he says about the Holes? By Clarke's Law alone it is going to be far more fantastic than we can imagine.

And what was that about Faith? Later Taylor declares that science "is an alternative method of defusing the mysterious to that of simply labelling it 'infinite' and kneeling before it." Does he really think it's as simple as that? The evidence in the book would make it appear so - ascribing the failure of the mighty civilisations of the past to their dependence on religion. On looking through his choices of emotive words we see that he has confused religion and faith with dogma and ritual; and knowledge with wisdom.

The quotes I've used contain the seeds of his own faith in science - faith that it is a true path to knowledge; faith that what are known as scientific laws and mathematical constants have some consistancy throughout time and space; and above all that some kind of value or positive virtue can be gained by steadfastly pursuing the rape of the 'infinite'. All of which can be summed up - that scientists' holiest task is to bang their heads against the brick wall of the 'unknowable'. The book does have a certain fascination - the discussions of the properties of Black Holes are quite interesting, but definitely 'popular science' stuff. I guess it'll do well enough.

LOST WORLDS - SCIENTIFIC SECRETS OF THE ANCIENTS
by Robert Charroux. Souvenir. £2.75.

In almost complete contrast, we have this book

by Charroux, the title of which seems to bear little relationship to its contents. A recent editorial in Flying Saucer Review pointed out the contribution to UFOlogy by the French, and in a way this is also true of fortean-related studies. Charroux himself is relatively unknown in England because of the lack of translations, but on the continent he has large followings, and even it appears, Robert Charroux clubs.

This book is another exposition in his quest to understand what he calls 'the mysterious unknown'. The first half contains the usual fortean mysteries (Bermuda triangle, Mary Celeste, the Nazca lines, Easter island & Mu, ancient transplant surgery, etc), but this time he gives us the results of a personal investigation, and admits to some unsubstantiated evidence in his writings before this. 'Mea culpa,' he cries, and rights his wrongs by seeing for himself. But this (now familiar) fare is only to be the hors d'oevres - the main course being a series of hypotheses, which are discussed to very little conclusion: that Love is more akin to a satanic than an Ideal state, affecting as it does our approach to morals, our judgement, our health, and our relationship to others; that eroticism has a rightful place in mysticism, in the worship of the Great Mother (the profoundest and oldest of religions from which none of us is free); the relationship between eroticism and creative imagination; the relationship between polywater, the philosophers' stone and Virgin Birth; and that the spacemen/Gods and many other visitors from elsewhere were Initiators in all senses of the word.

Next he devotes a heavy section to the idea that the foundation of Christianity was a conspiracy of gigantic proportions. The historical mystery of Jesus, is, as he phrases it, "examined from the most heretical viewpoints in a smell of fire and brimstone." Not, he is quick to stress, that this undermines the true spiritual values of the Church - only that doubts must be expressed about the orthodox version of the events in the life of Jesus, the authenticity of the Gospels, (over a hundred of the 'excluded' Gospels). Indeed, Charroux lays inspiration for the plot at the feet of the rather extremist and anti-establishment Essenes, and later perpetuated by various Popes. The book then ends in a succession of apparantly unconnected stories, as before including a discussion of fish-like alien visitors, and extra-terrestrial experiments , and whether the dolphin is not our ancestor.

The presentation, as a whole, is quite calm and reminiscent of the cool gallic style typical of the Pauwels & Bergier team. For Forteans who want more than a repetitious presentation of notes and stories, there is discussion and speculation but alas it is short and fragmented. Those working for the restoration of the mysteries of our ancient Isles will find interesting correlations abounding. Charroux (and the French Rosicrucians) are very much aware of our pre-Celtic heritage and the cult of the terrestrial currents.

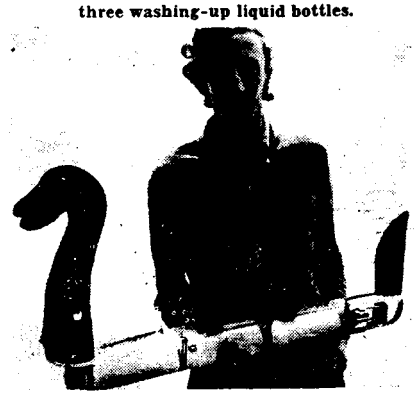
One defect in this well illustrated edition is that many other illustrations referred to in the text (and they sound quite interesting ones too) seem to have been omitted in translation. Charroux seems to be working toward a magnum opus on the 'mysterious unknown' which I eagerly await - in fact anycontribution to the central body of speculative philosophy that Fortean and allied studies now needs to bind them into an effective and realistic force will be most welcome and timely. A nice one - but not a great one - worth it if you can afford it.

WASHED—UP!

THE "Loch Ness monster" is alive and well ... and living in a lake near Slough.

She is the invention of 23-year-old Colin Gross, an electronics engineer, who loves making radio - controlled models. His "Nessie" is made *of polystyrene.*

The power for cruising on the lake comes from an engine and remote controls built into three washing-up liquid bottles.



Nessie revealed — with her inventor.

Sunday People. 21 Oct 73.

help

Paul Screeton, of 5 Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool, County Durham TS25 2A2, seeks personal accounts of witches, ghosts & elementals (fairies) in the counties of Northumberland & Durham. He is researching for books on these subjects.

THE EDITOR would like to hear from anybody who can help out with typing the copy for the NEWS, (access to an electric typer of some sort is fairly essential). We are also considering the idea of publishing, at the end of each volume, an analysis or reference index of notes - and we are looking for someone insane enough to take on the job of compilation. Please write if you'd like to discuss it or want more info.